



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
LANSING

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

REBECCA A. HUMPHRIES
DIRECTOR

March 14, 2005
RESUBMITTED: April 11, 2005

Memorandum to the Natural Resources Commission:

SUBJECT: December Pheasant Management Unit Expansion

Authority:

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, authorizes the Director and the Commission to issue orders to manage wild animals in this state.

Discussion and Background:

The Natural Resources Commission (NRC) and the Department were asked to consider expanding the December pheasant management unit to include the "Thumb" region of the Southern Lower Peninsula (SLP). Current late season pheasant hunting dates are December 1 to January 1.

Michigan has had a December pheasant hunting season since 1993. The "Thumb" region of Michigan has been excluded from December hunting because of public opposition based largely on concerns about lack of suitable habitat. Since 2001, however, a USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has added at least 15,000 acres of pheasant habitat to the Thumb landscape, and a new round of program enrollment started in 2005. Wildlife habitat has also been boosted in the Thumb through other partnerships with federal, state and non-governmental organizations. In addition, many conservation-minded landowners have improved habitat on their property without funding from conservation groups or government. This increase in wildlife food and cover has resulted in local pheasant population expansion. As a result, public opinion has shifted toward accepting December pheasant hunting in the Thumb. A public meeting was held February 15, 2005, at Cass City to discuss the proposal to extend December pheasant hunting into the Thumb. This expansion will provide 3,166 square miles of additional pheasant hunting opportunities.

Based on biological and social information available at this time, it is recommended that all of Genesee, Huron, Lapeer, Saginaw, Sanilac, Tuscola counties, and part of Bay county be added to the December pheasant management unit.

Recommendation:

This order was submitted for information only at the April 2005 meeting of the Natural Resources Commission. This item appeared in the April 25, 2005, Calendar and is eligible for approval on May 5, 2005. We are now recommending that it be acted upon at this meeting

William E. Moritz, Chief
Wildlife Division

Alan Marble, Chief
Law Enforcement Division

Arminda S. Koch
Resource Management Deputy

Dennis Fedewa
Chief Deputy

I have analyzed and discussed these recommendations with staff and concur as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER

Amendment No. 6 of 2005

Under the authority of sections 40107 and 40113a, Act No. 451 of the Public Acts of 1994, as amended, being sections 324.40107 and 324.40113a of the Michigan Compiled Laws, the Natural Resources Commission and the Director of the Department of Natural Resources ordered that effective May 6, 2005, the following section of the Wildlife Conservation Order shall read as follows:

12.750a "December pheasant management unit" defined.

Sec. 12.750a. "December pheasant management unit" means all of Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Gratiot, Hillsdale, Huron, Ionia, Ingham, Jackson, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, St. Clair, Tuscola, Washtenaw, and Wayne counties, and those portions of Allegan, Bay, Isabella, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, and St. Joseph counties, bounded by a line beginning at the junction of highway US-131 and the Indiana-Michigan border in St. Joseph county, then northerly on highway US-131 through St. Joseph, Kalamazoo, Allegan, Kent, and Montcalm counties to highway M-20 in Mecosta county, easterly on highway M-20 through Mecosta, Isabella, and Midland counties, continuing easterly on highway M-20 through the city of Midland (where highway M-20 is also known as business route US-10) to highway US-10 in Bay county, easterly on highway US-10 to highway I-75 (also known as US-23) in Bay county, continuing easterly on M-25 to the center of the Saginaw river, northerly to the mouth of the Saginaw river (Saginaw bay), north 50 degrees east to the International Boundary (Michigan state border), southerly to the Ohio-Michigan border (including all of St. Clair, Macomb, Wayne and Monroe counties), westerly on the Ohio-Michigan and then Indiana-Michigan borders to the point of beginning.

History: Eff. Sept. 1, 1995; Am. 10, 2004, Eff. May 8, 2004.

Issued this 5th day of May, 2005.

Approved as to matters over which the Natural Resources Commission has authority.

Keith J. Charters, Chairman
Natural Resources Commission

Approved as to matters over which the Director has authority.

Rebecca A. Humphries
Director